

In the News

Court “Serving” Jurors

A recent newspaper profile of a local court staffer gave Riverside County residents a glimpse of jury service at the Riverside Hall of Justice.

The story “Cheerful Service,” which appeared in the April 15 edition of the *Press Enterprise* (Riverside), features Manuel Gonzalez, the courthouse’s jury room supervisor. The article introduces Mr. Gonzalez—described by the court’s executive officer as a “people person”—and his mission of making jurors’ time at the courthouse as pleasant as possible. The story quotes a letter Mr. Gonzalez received from an ex-juror admitting that she had not looked forward to jury duty but had been impressed by his service and stewardship.

Through the story, prospective jurors have learned of the court’s and Mr. Gonzalez’s efforts to make their service at the Riverside Hall of Justice more palatable.

Other jury-related stories in the news:

‘Jury Service System Installed,’ *Modesto Bee*, May 26, 2003

Described the Superior Court of Stanislaus County’s new automated, interactive voice response system, which allows those summoned to reschedule their jury service over the phone. The system also provides information on jury duty.

‘Jurors Appreciated, Not Always Paid,’ *Press Telegram* (Long Beach), May 16, 2003

Announced Juror Appreciation Week and detailed the judicial branch’s efforts to encourage employers statewide to compensate their employees for jury service.

‘Even Judges Heed the Call to Jury Duty,’ *Los Angeles Times*, May 16, 2003

Explained that judges and other professionals are no longer being excused from serving on juries in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County.

‘Jurors to Receive Gifts of Appreciation This Week,’ *News-Messenger* (Lincoln), May 15, 2003

Described the Superior Court of Placer County’s efforts during Juror Appreciation Week to make jury service more pleasant.

‘Jury System Gets Help Making Strides Against Perennial Issues,’ *Pasadena Star News*, May 13, 2003

A contributing column from Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Jacqueline Con-

nor described the court’s efforts to improve jury service.

‘Court Officials Hope to Attract More Jurors,’ *San Bernardino County Sun*, May 12, 2003

Detailed the Superior Court of San Bernardino County’s efforts to improve jury service, such as through one-day or one-trial jury service and an automated, interactive voice response system that allows summoned jurors to reschedule their service over the phone and provides them with information on jury duty.

‘Transit Program Links MTA With L.A. Superior Court,’ *Gardena Valley News*, March 20, 2003

Announced the launch of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County’s Juror Pass Program, which offers public transit passes to jurors in exchange for giving up their vehicle mileage reimbursement.

Other stories in the news:

‘Better Panic Buttons, 150 Cameras—Courthouse Gets New Security System,’ *Business Journal* (Sacramento), May 30, 2003

Announced that the Superior Court of Sacramento County was upgrading the security system at its main courthouse by adding more security cameras and new panic buttons.

‘Whittier Drug Court Graduates First Class,’ *Whittier Daily News*, May 29, 2003

Described the first drug court graduation ceremony ever held at the Superior Court of Los Angeles County’s Whittier courthouse.

‘Hayward Hall of Justice Will Make Room for Children,’ *Alameda Times Star*, May 26, 2003

Announced that the Superior Court of Alameda County is beginning work on a children’s waiting area.

‘Teen Court Gives Youths Lesson in Law,’ *Los Angeles Times*, May 23, 2003

Featured the Superior Court of Los Angeles County’s teen court, in which teenagers submit themselves to a verdict of their peers.

‘Court Appeals to Coachella Youths,’ *Desert Sun* (Palm Springs), May 23, 2003

Described the Fourth Appellate District’s visit to Coachella Valley



A recent article in the *Press Enterprise* (Riverside) featured the Riverside Hall of Justice’s jury room supervisor, Manuel Gonzalez, who described his mission as making jurors’ stay at the courthouse as pleasant as possible. Photo: Pete Nielsen, Superior Court of Riverside County

High School. The justices heard oral argument in front of students in the school’s auditorium.

‘Judge: Courts Would Suffer Under Budget,’ *San Gabriel Valley Daily Tribune*, May 14, 2003

Reported that Superior Court of Los Angeles County Presiding Judge Robert A. Dukes addressed a local rotary club and updated its members on the court’s budget challenges.

‘Drug Courts Celebrate 7 Years of Successful Collaboration,’ *Advocate-News* (Fort Bragg), May 8, 2003

Detailed the success of Mendocino County’s adult drug court, juvenile drug court, and mentally ill offenders court program.

‘Volunteer to Spend Day in Court,’ *Oakland Tribune*, May 7, 2003

Featured the court information officer program at the Superior Court of Alameda County, in which volunteers stationed in courthouse lobbies provide information to the public.

‘Court of Appeal: Students Get Up Close With Law,’ *Progressive* (Chester), May 7, 2003

Highlighted a visit paid by justices from the Third Appellate District to Quincy High School, where they heard oral argument and later answered students’ questions.

‘Drug Court Program Graduates Five Youths,’ *Contra Costa Times*, May 5, 2003

Announced the Superior Court of Contra Costa County’s juvenile drug court graduation ceremony. The graduates were the fifth group to complete the program.

‘Numbers Add Up to Success for Drug Court,’ *Sun* (San Bernardino), May 4, 2003

Highlighted a state report that concluded that drug courts are reducing the jail population and are helping people get their lives back together.

‘State Names Napa Court Mentor in Family Program,’ *Calistogan*, May 1, 2003

Stated that the Superior Court of Napa County is one of six superior courts that received state grants to develop models for a unified family court that can better serve the needs of family law litigants.

‘Judge Edwards Continues to Spread Word of Youth Needs,’ *Town Crier* (Los Altos), April 30, 2003

Reported that Superior Court of Santa Clara County Judge Leonard Edwards spoke to members of the Los Altos Rotary Club about programs that help at-risk children.

‘Teens Mete Out Justice in Court Program,’ *Whittier Daily News*, April 27, 2003

Detailed the Superior Court of Los Angeles County’s teen court program and its 10th anniversary celebration at Wilson High School in East Los Angeles.

‘Mental Health Court Marks First Birthday,’ *Chico Enterprise Record*, April 24, 2003

Described the Superior Court of Butte County’s mental health court, where participants receive treatment for their conditions instead of jail time.

‘Courthouse Plan a Month Out,’ *Times* (Susanville), April 22, 2003

Highlighted Superior Court of Lassen County Judge Ridgely Lazard’s appearance before the county’s board of supervisors. He reported on the progress of the transfer of responsibility for courthouse facilities from the county to the state.

‘Free From Addiction, Cycle of Confinement,’ *Santa Barbara News Press*, April 18, 2003

Described the drug court in the Superior Court of Santa Barbara County and explained how it is combating recidivism and saving taxpayers money by reducing incarceration. ■

Law Day Unites Courts and Communities

"You take it for granted every day," wrote 11-year-old Aarika Alura in her poem, referring to the freedom available in the United States.

Aarika was one of many students honored for their poems, essays, and posters during the May 1 Law Day ceremonies at the Pomona courthouse in Los Angeles County. The regional contest was organized by the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and the Los Angeles Office of Education. It gave students a vehicle to express their feelings about freedom and the law.

more than 600 students and has recruited 75 volunteer speakers.

In addition to organizing the school visits, Alameda County's Law Day Committee arranged a question-and-answer session at the main courthouse in which 60 middle school students "examined" Presiding Judge Sheppard as well as the county's district attorney and public defender. Other court locations hosted informational sessions and courthouse tours for area middle and high schools.

The Law Day Committee was made up of representatives from the court, the Alameda County Bar Association, the Alameda County Law Library, and the Alameda County Office of Education and was co-chaired by Judge Leo Dorado and Deputy District Attorney Kim Hunter. The committee commenced a media outreach campaign in April to raise awareness of the week's events. The campaign included letters soliciting help for Law Week activities, sent to 2,500 attorneys, judges, and retired judges; an article in the *Bar Bulletin* newsletter; and distribution of information about Law Week at courthouses, public libraries, and the local Rotary Club.

KERN COUNTY

On May 1, the court's Law Week activities commenced with a commemoration ceremony in the law library, followed by mock trials involving local students. Throughout the day, the court coordinated tours, mini-legal courses, trivia games on legal research, and information booths on programs and services available through the court and other local criminal justice agencies. In preparation for the events, the courthouse was decorated with artwork from fourth-grade students and the Girl Scouts.

Law Week concluded on May 5 with a televised "Talk to the Judges" forum. Five judicial officers fielded questions from a live audience as well as those who called in to the program. Audience members included high school and college students enrolled in criminal justice and political science classes.



At a flag-raising ceremony to celebrate Law Day at the Old Orange County Courthouse, students, judges, locally elected officials, attorneys, and members of the Marine Corps paid tribute to the American flag. *Photo: Peter Conlon, Superior Court of Orange County*

ORANGE COUNTY

Locally elected officials, members of the judiciary, and 300 eighth-grade students gathered at the county's Old Courthouse to celebrate Law Day on May 1.

The day began with a flag raising and presentation of the colors by the Marine Corps and the Sheriff's Department Color Guards, followed by a performance by the choir from Orange County High School for the Performing Arts. Each eighth-grade class took a tour of the Old Courthouse and posed on its steps for a photograph. Next, the students visited the Central Justice Center in Santa Ana, where they talked with judges, attorneys, and courtroom staff members to learn more about the justice system.

Also in attendance were representatives from the Fourth District of the Court of Appeal, the Orange County Board of Supervisors, and the Orange County Department of Education. The Superior Court of Orange County organized the Law Day event.

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

In recognition of Law Day, the Superior Court of San Luis Obispo County hosted its first-ever "Community Law Night and Open House" on May 1. The court organized the event to not only celebrate Law Day, but to educate the public about the workings of the court and the need for low-cost legal services.

The court (in coordination with volunteers from the bar

and community organizations) arranged courthouse tours, an information fair featuring agencies that offer no- or low-cost legal assistance services, "Meet the Judge" sessions, and legal "how to" sessions led by local attorneys on issues such as traffic, divorce, probate, mediation, and small claims.

More than 300 people attended the Law Day activities, which were held in the evening to facilitate greater public participation. NBC, cable and radio news shows, and local newspapers covered the events.

VENTURA COUNTY

In recognition of Law Day, the Superior Court of Ventura County hosted an information table in the courtyard of the Government Center. Court staff members distributed brochures and booklets and answered questions about programs and services offered by the court. The other participants in the information fair included representatives of the public defender's office, county sheriff, probation department, and board of supervisors.

The court chose Law Day to launch the expansion of its Mobile Self-Help Legal Access Center to the county's two naval bases. The mobile center is a 35-foot motor home equipped with computers, videotapes, books, and pamphlets and staffed by court attorneys and volunteers from the local bar. On Law Day, the mobile center assisted personnel at the bases with a variety of legal matters. ■



The Superior Court of Ventura County chose Law Day to launch the expansion of its Mobile Self-Help Legal Access Center to the county's two naval bases. Court Executive Officer Michael Planet (second from left), Senior Attorney Carmen Ramirez (fifth from left), and Deputy Executive officer Gary Garcia (seventh from left) were welcomed by the base commander and his senior staff. During the day, the mobile center assisted base personnel with legal matters. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Ventura County*

The courthouses of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County celebrated Law Day in many other ways, such as through courthouse seminars for area teachers, volunteer bar members' offering free legal assistance, judges speaking at community meetings and schools, and courthouse tours and mock trials for local Girl Scouts, students, and other groups.

Following are descriptions of a few other California courts' observances of Law Day 2003.

ALAMEDA COUNTY

The Superior Court of Alameda County turned Law Day into Law Week. Presiding Judge Harry Sheppard took part in several Law Week events. He presented the Tri-Valley Haven Restraining Order Clinic Volunteer Team with the annual Liberty Bell Award for community service by a nonlawyer or non-government employee, and he honored the county's mock trial winners from Piedmont High School.

The week's other activities included visits by judges and attorneys to more than 25 classes in schools throughout Alameda County to speak about the legal system. To date, the county's ongoing Bench-Bar Speaker Outreach Program has reached



To help commemorate Law Day, the Superior Court of Alameda County hosted informational sessions and courthouse tours for area middle and high schools. *Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Alameda County*

Law Day Becomes Law

President Dwight D. Eisenhower established Law Day by presidential proclamation in 1951. But it wasn't until 1961 that Congress declared May 1 "a special day of celebration by American people in appreciation of their liberties" and an occasion for "rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under laws."

Sustaining Collaborative Courts

Drug courts. Teen courts. Mental health courts. These are a few of the collaborative justice courts that can be found at superior courts throughout California. And despite the successes of these programs, their coordinators are often looking for resources to sustain them, especially during these lean budgetary times.

The sustainability of collaborative courts was just one of many topics discussed at this year's National Association of Drug Court Professionals Annual Conference in Reno on May 15-17. With input and assistance from many of California's collaborative courts, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) presented examples of how some of California's innovative courts are finding outside resources to help maintain their programs.

GET THE WORD OUT

One of the themes of the AOC's presentation was the need to get the word out about collaborative justice programs. Community leaders may have no idea that the court is involved in alternative programs such as drug courts, but their ideas, connections, and resources are critically important.

Following is a summary of some examples of collaborative justice courts in California presented at the conference and how they are finding resources to maintain their programs.

BUTTE COUNTY—DRUG COURT

The Superior Court of Butte County invited local politicians and key community partners to

brainstorm about ways to improve its drug court program. The court hired a facilitator and provided lunch for the meeting. Participants discussed options and resources and figured out a way for the county to shift some personnel funds to support residential treatment of drug court defendants.

**MERCED COUNTY—
DRUG COURT**

To showcase its drug court, the Superior Court of Merced County each year invites the chair of the board of supervisors to speak at its drug court graduation ceremony. Judges involved in the drug court also speak at the graduation, citing the jail costs avoided by the program and giving examples of graduates who likely would have entered prison if not for drug court. They also mention that full-time employment is a requirement for graduation.

**RIVERSIDE COUNTY—
DEPENDENCY DRUG
COURT**

After receiving a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the Superior Court of Riverside County contracted with WestEd, a national nonprofit organization, to do an evaluation of its dependency drug court program. WestEd is involved with many social service projects and often is invited to speak at meetings of community organizations and local agencies. After hearing about Riverside's program, one of those agencies agreed to reallocate state funds to ensure the sustainability of the dependency

drug court.

**SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY—
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
COURT**

A portion of the settlement money California received by way of its lawsuit against tobacco companies was set aside to aid children under five years of age. The Superior Court of San Joaquin County managed to gain a portion of the funds to help sustain its domestic violence court by designating the money to serve children of family members involved in domestic violence proceedings. The court secured an initial grant of \$25,000 and is now seeking a standard contract.

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY—
MENTAL HEALTH COURT**

The Superior Court of Santa Clara County enlisted the help of the district attorney's office to find volunteer licensed therapists. The district attorney obtained a mailing list from the community of practitioners involved in EMDR (eye movement, desensitization, and recovery) therapy for trauma and abuse. The district attorney then wrote a letter to 600 local therapists, seeking their voluntary time for the court's mental health court. Twelve of them volunteered to help the court. One is donating three hours per week.

Santa Clara County's mental health court also sought assistance from pharmaceutical companies that offer medications for the care of indigent people through patient assistance programs. Working with the court's coordinator and psy-

chiatrist, a pharmaceutical company approves the court's application for assistance and sends a four-month supply of either free medication or vouchers. The court must reapply after four months and must find a community health clinic to do any necessary blood work.

In addition, the court recently received a multiyear grant from the U.S. Department of Justice which will allow it to provide an intensive case manager for dually diagnosed clients (those having both drug and mental health issues). Clients will receive intensive case management for the first 60 days post-release from custody in order to assist with medication issues, housing, applications for social security benefits, and general assistance.

● For more information on these collaborative justice court programs, contact Lisa Lightman, AOC's Collaborative Justice Courts Program, 415-865-7614; e-mail: lisa.lightman@jud.ca.gov. ■

Collaborative Justice Media Kit

A new media kit provides information on planning and implementing outreach efforts related to collaborative justice courts. The kit—developed by the Administrative Office of the Courts in coordination with collaborative justice professionals—contains tips for communicating with reporters, samples of news releases, drug court statistics, and an invitation to take a courthouse tour.

● To view the media kit, visit www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/collab/documents/mediakit.pdf.

Collaborative Justice Partners

Superior courts in California have found many partners to help them sustain their collaborative justice court programs:

- ▶ National and state justice agencies
- ▶ Local hospitals
- ▶ Rotary clubs
- ▶ Police departments
- ▶ Universities and colleges
- ▶ Health-care companies
- ▶ Pharmaceutical companies
- ▶ Professional (e.g., doctors, attorneys, and therapists) associations and organizations
- ▶ Locally elected officials

New JC Members

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chaired the California Judicial Administration Conference Content Committee.

Judge Michael Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, will replace Judge Aviva K. Bobb, also of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. Since 1995, Judge Nash has served in Los Angeles County as either presiding judge of the juvenile court or supervising judge of the juvenile dependency court. He is co-chair of the council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, a position he has held since 1999, and he has been active in juvenile law education. The winner of numerous awards for his professional service, Judge Nash is active in the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and was the Judicial Council's representative to a task force of the California Attorney

General on the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act. Before his appointment to the bench in 1985, he was a deputy attorney general in the state Attorney General's Office (1974-1985) and a co-prosecutor in the notorious Hillside Strangler trial in Los Angeles.

Judge William J. Murray, Jr., of the Superior Court of San Joaquin County will replace Presiding Judge Brad R. Hill of the Superior Court of Fresno County. Since his appointment to the superior court bench in 1995, Judge Murray has chaired the court's committees on community-focused court planning, jury service, and media relations. He is a member of the Judicial Council's Criminal Law Advisory Committee and Task Force on Jury System Improvements. Active in judicial education programs, he has served as an instructor on jury issues and on racial bias in the justice system. Judge Murray is a past-president of the San Joaquin County Law Library Board of Trustees.

(1998–2000) and a current member of the boards of directors of Humphreys College and the Boys and Girls Club of Stockton. In 2002 he served on the Stockton Mayor's Task Force on Racial Harmony and Fairness.

Mr. Rex S. Heinke, a partner of the Los Angeles law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, will replace Los Angeles attorney Rex Heeseman. One of four attorneys on the Judicial Council, Mr. Heinke was appointed by the State Bar Board of Governors. Listed in *Best Lawyers in America* since 1993, Mr. Heinke is a member of the California Academy of Appellate Lawyers and was the recipient of the 1999 Freedom of Information Award of the Los Angeles Society of Professional Journalists. Active in his local bar, he is a past-president of the Los Angeles County Bar Association, the Los Angeles County Bar Foundation, and Public Counsel. Mr. Heinke has practiced litigation in Los Angeles since 1976.

Mr. Alan Slater (advisory member), Executive Officer of the Superior Court of Orange County, was reappointed for a new term. For more than three decades, Mr. Slater has served in leadership positions in the superior court—assistant executive officer from 1972 to 1981 and executive officer since 1981. Active in Judicial Council activities for many years, Mr. Slater serves on the council's Policy Coordination and Liaison Committee, as the chair of the Court Executives Advisory Committee, and as a liaison member of the governing board of the Center for Judicial Education and Research. He is a past member of the Court Technology Advisory Committee, Court Profiles Advisory Committee, Blue Ribbon Commission on Jury System Improvement, and Trial Court Funding Advisory Committee, among others. ■

Update From the AOC's Regional Offices



Sheila Gonzalez
Director
Southern
Regional Office



Michael M.
Roddy
Director
Northern/Central
Regional Office



Christine Patton
Director
Bay Area/
Northern Coastal
Regional Office

The Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC) regional offices enable the Judicial Council, the AOC, and the courts to work more effectively as partners in addressing local needs and fulfilling new state-level responsibilities. Following is an update on the recent activities of the three regional offices, located in Burbank, Sacramento, and San Francisco.

COURT SECURITY

Senate Bill 1396—signed into law in the 2002 legislative session—expanded and clarified allowable and unallowable court security expenditures. The AOC's Northern/Central Regional Office (NCRO) has been working with the California State Sheriffs' Association (CSSA) and the AOC's Finance Division to implement the bill. Since SB 1396 was signed into law, the NCRO has:

- Presented training sessions on SB 1396 in Sacramento, San Francisco, and Burbank for more than 250 representatives of sheriffs' departments, courts, and counties;

- Responded to and compiled a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) from the SB 1396 trainings, in coordination with CSSA and the AOC's Finance Division (an FAQs document will be distributed to the courts and CSSA this summer);

- Provided technical assistance in interpreting the legislation and answering billing questions to numerous sheriffs' offices and courts; and

- Worked with CSSA and the AOC's Finance Division to develop forms for reporting court security expenditures. The forms were distributed to the courts and county sheriffs in May and are being used to develop more complete, accurate,

and comparable financial information on new allowable costs.

- For more information, contact Michael M. Roddy, Northern/Central Regional Office, 916-263-1333; e-mail: mike.rodny@jud.ca.gov.

CALIFORNIA CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

At the direction of the Judicial Council and in coordination with the AOC's Information Services Division, the AOC's Southern Regional Office has been facilitating the development of the California Case Management System (CCMS). When complete, the new system will meet the case management needs of all 58 superior courts. The CCMS project is being led by the California Case Management Oversight Committee, which includes court representatives from Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, and Ventura Counties.

The CCMS project is being developed in two parts. The Criminal and Traffic Project, which is based on systems used in Orange and Ventura Counties, is expected to be complete and ready for testing in November. The Civil, Small Claims, and Probate Project will serve as the basis for an overall long-term case management system and will eventually include all case types. Vendors are currently developing proposals for that project.

- For more information, contact Sheila Gonzalez, Southern Regional Office, 818-558-3020; e-mail: sheila.gonzalez@jud.ca.gov.

COURT CONSULTING SERVICES PROGRAM

In May the AOC established the Court Consulting Services Pro-

gram to coordinate consulting services and give technical assistance to the courts and the AOC. The program is being run by the AOC's Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Office. It will be responsible for:

- Establishing a formal protocol for responding to requests for consulting and technical assistance;

- Identifying key outside consultants who will work under a master contract as part of the consulting resources team;

- Bringing together "best practices" teams of judges, court professionals, and AOC staff to review specific operational processes, offer thoughts on possible improvements, and recommend practices that should be explored as possible best practices; and

- Maintaining data on proven external consultants, briefing consultants on the courts and the AOC, and ensuring regular performance evaluations.

- For more information, contact Fred Miller, Bay Area/Northern Coastal Regional Office, 415-865-7709; e-mail: fred.miller@jud.ca.gov.

VIDEOCONFERENCING

The California courts recently installed videoconference equipment, thus taking advantage of technology to significantly reduce costly flights, mileage charges, hotels, and unproductive hours spent traveling to meetings and other court business. Initially proposed by a group of trial courts in the Central Valley, the project was a year-long collaborative effort of the participating trial courts, the AOC's Northern/Central Regional Office, and the AOC's Information Services Division.

Participating courts have already used the equipment in many ways, such as for:

- Meetings of an appellate panel that included judges in Plumas and Nevada Counties and attorneys in Sacramento;

- Video arraignments;

- Communication with branch courts; and

- Meetings with other trial courts and with the AOC's regional offices.

Videoconferencing is available in 27 trial court locations and in the AOC's regional offices.

- For more information, contact Michael M. Roddy, Northern/Central Regional Office, 916-263-1333; e-mail: mike.rodny@jud.ca.gov.

COURT COLLECTIONS PROGRAMS

The AOC's Southern Regional Office, with input from the courts, led the preparation of a statewide proposal to ensure efficient collection of court-ordered fees, fines, forfeitures, penalties, and assessments. The proposal provided information for the drafting of Senate Bill 940, which would require that

every superior court and county develop a cooperative plan to implement a collections program. Each cooperative plan would include:

- A list of issues for discussion by a working group to be established by the Judicial Council;

- An outline of four basic systems for collections, on which courts and counties could base their operations;

- Training and education needed by courts and counties with respect to Judicial Council guidelines and reporting requirements;

- Discussion of incentives for courts, counties, and the state to enhance their collections programs; and

- Recommendations for what to do if Senate Bill 940 is not enacted.

The Southern Regional Office and the AOC's Finance Division are facilitating an ad hoc committee made up of trial court leaders. The committee is preparing for possible statewide collections efforts and fee increases that are likely to take effect once the State Budget is signed.

- For more information on collections programs, contact Sheila Gonzalez, Southern Regional Office, 818-558-3020; e-mail: sheila.gonzalez@jud.ca.gov. For more information on fee increases, contact the AOC's Finance Division, 415-865-7966.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The AOC's regional offices respond to many requests for technical assistance from the trial courts in the areas of general court operations, human resources, fiscal services, and legal issues. Recent assistance has included:

- Developing requests for proposals from court-appointed counsel, collections services, and small claims advisors;

- Conducting informal surveys on court operations;

- Coordinating executive recruitments for trial court management staffs;

- Responding to inquiries about implementing a variety of court-related legislation; and

- Assisting with the interpretation of financial documents and preparation for funding requests.

TRAINING

The regional offices frequently host meetings and training classes for trial courts, including:

- Briefings on statewide technology projects and facilities legislation for trial courts and their counties, and

- Classes presented by the AOC's Education Division, such as "Basic Supervision Skills," "Building Your Court Team," "Coaching Skills," and "Conflict Management."

- For more information, contact Claudia Fernandes, Education Division, 415-865-7799; e-mail: claudia.fernandes@jud.ca.gov. ■

Sucorte

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sees speak only Spanish. "The new Spanish Web site can help the large number of Spanish speakers who never even make it to the courthouse."

PROMOTING THE SITE

The AOC is working in partnership with the courts, referral groups, and Hispanic media to promote the new Spanish self-help site. The agency is sending Spanish postcards, posters, and bilingual site maps for distribution in courthouses and self-help

centers, social service agencies, legal aid offices, and law enforcement agencies. Media relations efforts include television and radio public service announcements as well as sending information about the site to the press.

NEXT STEPS

Both the English and Spanish self-help sites are continually being improved. The AOC anticipates adding a new button on each site's home page that will direct users to materials in Korean, Vietnamese, and other languages. In addition, the sites will add links to new interactive court forms once they are translated into Spanish.

- For more information about Centro de Ayuda, contact Bonnie Hough, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, 415-865-7668; e-mail: bonnie.hough@jud.ca.gov. For posters, postcards, and other promotional materials, contact Lynne Mayo, AOC's Office of Communications, 415-865-7740; e-mail: pubinfo@jud.ca.gov. ■

Active Internet Users in Spanish-Speaking Nations

United States	12,394
Spain	11,146
Mexico	7,169
Argentina	3,216
Colombia	1,576

Source: comScore Media Metrix